

# Current Resources for Earth Day

## Projects

### Project Ideas

- Have students create posters showing others in the school simple things they can do to “go green” (change incandescent light bulbs to compact fluorescent, turn down the thermostat, turn off the water while you brush your teeth, etc.)
- Have students write or record an Earth Day pledge, sharing their pledge for making the world a better place.
- Decorate paper bags to donate to a grocery store, include inspirational statements or creative ideas to share Earth Day with others.
- Write a letter or create a proposal for school administrators encouraging them to make the school a “greener” place.
- Hold an Earth Day Clean Up Parade, encouraging the community to keep the surrounding area free of litter.
- Plant trees or flowers on school grounds or in the community.
- Hold a neighborhood or school clean up.
- Start a community garden.
- Make and distribute rain barrels to help others recycle rain water.
- Recycle non-traditional items, such as juice pouches and chip bags with TerraCycle (details below).
- Paint a mural in an area that needs beautification.
- Remove graffiti in your community.
- Adopt a Rainforest or fundraise to help conserve rainforests.
- Make birdhouses to support the local bird population.
- Recycle old books, games, cell phones, or other items by holding a Re-Use Drive.
- Hold an Earth Day fair, where students can share ideas or learn about conservation, recycling, and how they can make a difference.
- Create a compost bin
- Tin can herb pots
- Walk-A-Thon/Bike to School
- Community Report Card
- Implement a school recycling program

### **Spreading the Word about your Project**

The following websites were created to spread the word about service and to help volunteers in finding service opportunities. Please utilize these sites to search for volunteer opportunities, share your projects and get others involved!

[www.gysd.org](http://www.gysd.org)

**\*There might be another site, as we get closer to GYSD.**

### **Reflection \***

Reflection activities play an important role in helping students to analyze, understand, and gain meaning from the service they are participating in. Many teachers/facilitators think reflection activities have to be writing intensive, but there are a variety of ways that students can reflect. The following list of reflection activities is divided into activities to be used pre-service, during service, post-service, and general activities that could be used throughout the process.

#### **Pre-Service Activities**

Pre-service activities should assist students in looking at their assumptions and biases, as well as expectations of what they hope to accomplish.

1. Have students write a letter to themselves describing their feelings, their expectations, and what they hope to gain from this process. The teacher/facilitator should keep the letters and return them at the end of the program during the final reflection stage.
2. Working individually or in groups, have students design and create a utopia envisioning what their community would be like if they could fix all the problems that they have discovered during the community inventory. They could present their utopia in a variety of ways - in a written format, as a poster, or as a play.
3. As a group, create a list of expectations and hoped for outcomes from the activity. Write the list on chart paper and refer back to it at the end of the program during the final reflection phase.

#### **During Service Activities**

Reflection activities carried out during service should allow students to process their feelings and revisit their expectations in light of what they have done so far. Reflection is also useful at this point to help students look at the direction they are going, identify next steps, and make adjustments if needed.

1. Hold a mock debate where students defend various sides relating to the issue they are pursuing.
2. Have students write a letter to their family or friends explaining the project they are working on and what their goals are.

Suggestion: The teacher/facilitator may be more successful using writing based activities as this point, particularly if students are very involved with the issue they are working on.

### Post Reflection Activities

Post-service reflection activities should assist students in evaluating and drawing conclusions from their experiences. They should also provide meaning and help students to understand what they found out about themselves during the service experience.

1. Have the students take photographs throughout the process. At the end, tell each student to select a group of photographs that most accurately portrays the experience they had. Have them create a poster using these photographs with captions explaining why they chose particular pictures.
2. Have the group save items throughout the process then use these to make a group scrapbook at the end. Items that could be included - letters, meeting agendas, surveys, phone transcripts, photographs, etc.
3. Ask students to choose one word that best describes their service experience. Have them make a poster based around this word. (This poster could be combined with the photo poster. Students could choose their word, then select photographs that represent it.)
4. Individually or in groups, have students create an artistic representation of their experience. It could be a collage, a drawing, a painting, or a mural.

5. To facilitate a final reflection discussion, create reflection stations by writing questions on chart paper, posting them around the room, and having students write answers to the questions on each chart. Questions could include 1. What was your most memorable experience? 2. What do you feel best about? 3. How has this experience changed the way you think? The teacher/facilitator could then use the responses to lead a class discussion.
6. Have students videotape the process throughout then create a documentary at the end. If discussion was the primary mode of reflection, students could record discussions on an audiotape then edit sections to create an audio documentary.
7. Have students create a resume listing the skills they developed or improved through their experience with the activity.

#### Reflection Activities to be Used Throughout

1. Discussion-based activities:
  - As a lead-in to reflective discussion, pose a question and have students do five minutes of silent reflection before the discussion begins.
  - Write a quote on the board and have students respond.
  - Use metaphors, (i.e. doing this project is like ...)
  - Create a continuum representing various views of an issue. Have students stand at a point on the continuum and explain why they chose to stand there.
  - Pose a question then think, pair, share (have students pair off, discuss the question, then report back to the group).
  - Skittle game – pass out a skittle to each student. Have a list of reflection questions prepared and link each question to a color. Go around the room and have each student answer a question based on the color of the skittle they received.
2. Writing based activities:
  - Have students keep a journal throughout.
  - Have students write stories or poems to express their feelings or describe experiences.
  - Round Robin Poetry – Pose a reflection question or a theme and have each student write two lines of poetry relating to that question or theme. As the poem goes around the room, fold the paper so that each student can only see the lines written by the previous student. At the end, read the full poem to the group. Rewrite the poem onto a poster board.

- Each day as students are preparing to leave, pose a question (i.e. what did you find out today that you did not know before?) and write the question on a piece of chart paper. Before each student leaves, have him/her write a one-sentence response to the question. The teacher/facilitator could also write the sentence for the student.
  - Instead of keeping individual journals, the group could create a group journal where students could jot down ideas and feelings throughout the activity.
3. Other kinds of activities that could be used for reflection:
    - Writing plays / Writing songs / Creating dances / Doing role plays
  4. Critical Incident Activity. Anytime students have a pivotal experience during the activity, the teacher/facilitator could use the critical incident activity to help students assess the impact of the experience. This activity could be done as a discussion or as a written activity.

\*These reflection activities are a resources from Earth Force (website listed below).

## **Resources**

### **Learning to Give Lessons**

Learning to Give has dozens of Earth Day and Service lesson plans, all coded to state standards, to help you tie your Earth Day and Global Youth Service Day event into your classroom.

<http://learningtogive.org/genonltg/>

### **generationOn Lessons**

generationOn has several lesson on the Environment and Service that can be used for Earth Day and Global Youth Service Day

### **Global Youth Service Day**

Global Youth Service Day is an annual campaign that celebrates and mobilizes the millions of children and youth who improve their communities each day of the year through service and service-learning.

The Global Youth Service Day website ([www.gysd.org](http://www.gysd.org)) has tons of resources to help you brainstorm, plan, and share your Global Youth Service Day event.

### **Turn Trash into Treasure**

TerraCycle makes affordable, eco-friendly products from a wide range of different non-recyclable waste materials. Schools can collect juice pouches, wrappers, chip bags and other materials and turn them into cool products.

[www.terracycle.net](http://www.terracycle.net)

### **Earth Day Everyday**

The United States Environmental Protection Agency website has a wealth of information about current environmental issues, environmental news, tips for getting involved, and lots of other helpful tools for planning Earth Day activities.

[www.epa.gov/earthday](http://www.epa.gov/earthday)

### **Teacher Planet Earth Day Resources**

Teacher planet has free lessons, activities, clip art, and worksheets to tie Earth Day activities into your classroom. Teachers can post their own ideas and helpful hints, as well.

<http://www.teacherplanet.com/resource/earthday.php>

### **Teacher Vision Earth Day Resources**

Teacher Vision has lessons, printables, and resources to help teach students about the environment and how to preserve our planet. Lessons are divided by grade level.

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/earth-day/teacher-resources/6612.html>

### **Earth Day: TeachersFirst Editors' Choices**

With so many outstanding resources available on the web related to environmental concerns, TeachersFirst's editorial team has hand-selected a group of "Editors' Choices" for their potential to engage and involve your students in both the understanding of scientific concepts surrounding Earth Day and in environmental activism for any time of the year.

<http://www.teachersfirst.com/holiday/earthday.cfm>

### **Earth Day – Kaboose**

This website contains lessons and tools for not only the classroom, but also for home. In addition, there are a ton of activities and projects to do in the classroom.

<http://holidays.kaboose.com/earth-day/>

### **Trees for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Trees for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is a unique educational and tree-planting program for children ages 6 to 18, involving service-based learning, tree-planting, and ongoing stewardship activities.

<http://www.earthnxt.org/programs/trees21.html>

### **Earth Force**

Engages young people as active citizens who improve the environment and their communities now and in the future. This site contains resources for teachers, including videos, watershed information and activities.

<http://www.earthforce.org/>

### **Arbor Day**

This official site of the Arbor Day Foundation provides information about planting and caring for trees, and their various programs.

<http://www.arborday.org/index.cfm>

### **Zerofootprint**

Carbon footprint calculator for young students.

[http://www.zerofootprintkids.com/kids\\_home.aspx](http://www.zerofootprintkids.com/kids_home.aspx)

### **World Wildlife Fund**

WWF has 3 adoption packages. There is one for \$25, one for \$50, and one for \$100:

[http://www.worldwildlife.org/ogc/species\\_SKU.cfm?gid=54](http://www.worldwildlife.org/ogc/species_SKU.cfm?gid=54)

### **Wildlife Adoption and Gift Center**

Another website for animal adoption is:

[https://secure.defenders.org/site/Ecommerce?store\\_id=8721&VIEW\\_HOMEPAGE=true&FOLDER=0&TYPE=&NAME=&s\\_src=3WEW10003SXXX&s\\_subsrc=adopthome&JServSessionIdr004=reqmzo99y1.app224a](https://secure.defenders.org/site/Ecommerce?store_id=8721&VIEW_HOMEPAGE=true&FOLDER=0&TYPE=&NAME=&s_src=3WEW10003SXXX&s_subsrc=adopthome&JServSessionIdr004=reqmzo99y1.app224a)

### **Earth Day Network**

Provides ideas on how to “Take Action” for Earth Day 2011.

<http://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2011>

### **Earth Hour**

March 26 at 8:30 p.m. could jumpstart your Earth Day/GYSD project, as Earth Hour will celebrate a worldwide commitment to ongoing change for the betterment of the one thing that unites us all – the planet.

<http://www.earthhour.org/>